

27 January 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Conversations with Russ Blandford and Frank Slatinshek,
House Armed Services Committee Staff, re Handling
of Agency Matters by the Committee

1. Today I talked separately with Russ Blandford, Chief Counsel, and Frank Slatinshek, Assistant Chief Counsel, House Armed Services Committee, following the Director's conversation on this same subject Friday with Representative Hebert.

2. Blandford made the following points:

a. He personally agrees with the Director's position that it would be a mistake to give the full House Armed Services Committee authority over all Agency matters.

b. However, under the new rule limiting the number of Subcommittee chairmanships which any one member can hold, Mr. Hebert cannot chair the CIA Subcommittee and no other suitable candidate is available.

c. Hence, Mr. Hebert is groping for some way of getting around this problem but has found no final solution. As an interim measure, he proposes to arrange periodic situation briefings of the full Committee by Agency representatives from which operational or other sensitive matters would be excluded.

d. Mr. Hebert's present thought is that these matters particularly dealing with internal Agency affairs such as budget, personnel strength, sources and methods, should be reviewed only by himself and Representative Arends.

e. In any event, Mr. Hebert does not plan to take any initiative in setting up such briefings at this time, but will initiate them if and when he gets pressure from the Committee about the handling of CIA matters. Therefore we need not start preparing for such briefings until further notice.

f. Admittedly the situation is still murky and there may be difficulty in getting the membership to accept the above formula, but Mr. Hebert hopes that something along these lines can be worked out.

g. So far as classification of such briefings is concerned, the general level should be secret or perhaps top secret "reinforced" i. e., drawing on material from all sources but not identifying sensitive sources as such.

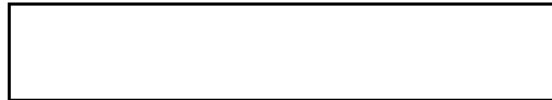
3. Following my meeting with Blandford, I met separately with Frank Slatinshek and reviewed the same ground. Slatinshek shared Blandford's understanding that Mr. Hebert was still feeling his way in handling this problem, and Slatinshek pointed out that no matter what we did there would be certain difficulties. Slatinshek indicated that Mr. Hebert's present thinking was that sensitive Agency matters would be handled by himself, Mr. Arends and Mr. Price (whereas Blandford thought it would be handled only by Hebert and Arends).

4. I asked Slatinshek about what kind of officer would be appropriate for the type of briefing visualized. He said he should be a senior officer but not a "big name." In other words he explained he should be mature, surefooted and effective in answering any significant substantive questions, but should be able to plausibly explain he was not a policymaker and not privy to certain high-level matters.

5. I mentioned to Slatinshek that one problem that came to mind was the likelihood that, in sessions with the full Committee, someone would raise the issue of whether the Committee was sitting as a CIA oversight committee or not. I said I could imagine such an

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individual insisting that if the full Committee was sitting in place of the former CIA Subcommittee, he was entitled to know details regarding the Agency's personnel strength, budget, and sensitive projects. If not, such a member might insist that there was no effective oversight committee and hence CIA was not being adequately supervised. Slatinshek agreed this was a very real problem and only time could tell how the Chairman would handle it if it actually arose. I asked Slatinshek whether, on the basis of experience with the DIA briefings, he would expect a regular weekly session or something less formal. He said this was hard to predict--that at one time the DIA briefings had been on a weekly basis at 8:00 or 8:30 a.m. but recently no more than two or three members showed up for them.



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